DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 021 677 RC 002 569

INDIANS OF NORTH CAROLINA.
Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 68
Note- 16p.
Available from- Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (GPO: 1968/0-287-680, $.15)
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors- *ACCULTURATION, *AMERICAN INDIANS, CULTURAL BACKGROUND, ECONOMIC DISADVANTAGEMENT, *ECONOMIC PROGRESS, FEDERAL AID, FEDERAL LEGISLATION, *HISTORICAL REVIEWS, MODERN HISTORY, *UNITED STATES HISTORY
Identifiers- *Cherokee Indians, North Carolina

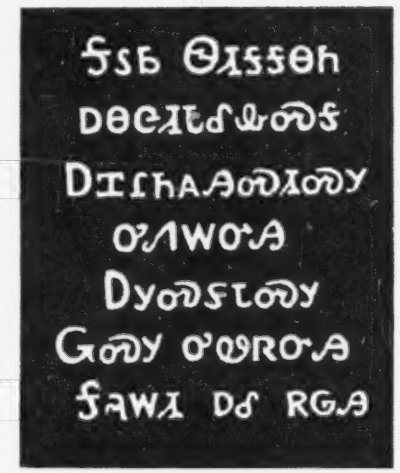
A brief historical review of the Cherokee Indians from the mid-sixteenth century to modern day depicts an industrious tribe adversely affected by the settlement movement only to make exceptional economic advancements with the aid of the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Civic pride and self-leadership among the Cherokee Indians in North Carolina has resulted in increased employment, industrial development, education, social welfare, and a thriving tourist business. Pictures and maps add significance to the material presented. (SW)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

NORTH CAROLINA

SEAL OF THE CHEROKEE NATION. GWY3 D8J SEP. 6, 1839.



"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth."

—Psalms 121:1-2
(Translation from the Cherokee)

This passage from the Bible has particular meaning to the Eastern Band of Cherokees in North Carolina, whose ancestors took refuge in the mountains during forced removal of the tribe to Oklahoma. That was in 1838. The descendants of those refugees now number 6,000 people who live on the Cherokee Indian Reservation—a mountainous tract in western North Carolina of more than 56,500 acres.

Always an industrious people, the Cherokees today are engaged in much the same occupations as their fellow Americans. They farm, manage their forests, work in manufacturing plants established on the reservation and cater to about five million tourists each year. They are anxious to welcome even more.

INDIANS OF NORTH CAROLINA

THE INDUSTRIOUS CHEROKEES

Cherokee Indians had been strongly entrenched in the southern Alleghenies for several centuries when DeSoto sighted them in 1540. By the time white traders began to penetrate the Appalachians they found the Cherokees a prosperous, diversified people, occupying what are now the States of North and South Carolina, Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama. They were farmers, growing corn, beans, squash, melons, and tobacco. They were artists, carving ceremonial masks and wooden bowls and weaving fine baskets. They were also hunters, fishers, traders, and sometimes warriors, defending their lands against Indian enemies north and south.

The 18th century drastically altered the Cherokees' traditional way of life. Early in the 1700's, land-hungry settlers began to encroach upon their rich lands. A new enemy, smallpox, appeared in 1738, killing half the tribe. From 1756 until the century's end, Cherokees were sporadically at war with colonists. Military defeats cost them many lives; their homes, crops, and livestock were heavily damaged; and the tribe was forced to give up much of its best land.

As the 19th century began, the Cherokees subjected themselves to an intensive stocktaking. Despite war, disease, and dislocation, they still had about 43,000 square miles of land (including that of the present Reservation). But they realized both the futility of war and the inadequacy of their primitive society to deal with the new, stronger one of the white man. With the considerable aid of white missionaries among them, they embarked upon a period of recovery and rebuilding that was to advance them to the top rank of America's Indians.

The tribe formed first a Cherokee National Council and, in 1820, established the Cherokee Nation, a republican form of government with a 32-member unicameral legislature, with its capital at New Echota, Georgia. A constitution and code of law followed in 1827. Executive power was vested in a principal chief, the first of whom was the great John Ross, for 40 years to be leader of the Cherokee Nation.

Invention and development of a complete Cherokee syllabary by Sequoyah led to the tribe's most notable accomplishment during its brief "golden age;" the Cherokees made themselves a literate people.

Sequoyah, one of the most brilliant figures in the annals of the American Indian, was born in Tennessee about 1760, the son of a white trader and a Cherokee woman of mixed blood. He grew up in the tribe, was a hunter and fur trader until permanently crippled in a hunting accident. Although he never attended school, Sequoyah learned to read and write by studying mission-school primers. By 1821 he had devised a system of writing suitable to Cherokee, the only case in American Indian records of a writing method invented without white prompting. Sequoyah carried his language system far beyond the Eastern Band to Cherokees living in the west. He died in Mexico at the age of 83. (PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN OFFICE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY.)

But the tribe, already living in greatly reduced space, was faced with intensified threats to its land. To the continuing inroads of settlers was added a growing sentiment for completely removing the Indians. With the discovery in 1828 of gold in Georgia, on the edge of Cherokee territory, the cry for removal was intensified. By 1830 removal had become national policy.

Exodus and the Trail of Tears

The Cherokees' struggle for protection under Federal guarantees was lost in December 1835, with the signing of an agreement under which the entire tribe would move beyond the Mississippi in exchange for land there and payment of $5 million. The Treaty of New Echota had not been negoti-

ated by officials of the Cherokee Nation—only by a few members of the tribe—and most of the tribe would not accept it. The Government, however, considered it binding. The Cherokees resisted for 2 years, but Federal troops were finally called in to round up the entire population for removal.

There followed the tragic time in Cherokee history which, even today, is remembered as "The Trail of Tears." About 14,000 Cherokees began the 800-mile-long journey on foot to Indian territory in what is now Oklahoma. Almost one-fourth died during the terrible hardships and suffering of the 6-month-long ordeal. (The Government's removal action was deplored by many Americans of the day. Said Daniel Webster, "There is a strong and growing feeling in the country that great wrong has been done to the Cherokee by the Treaty of New Echota.")

Thus Cherokee tribal jurisdiction over its inherited land in North Carolina came to an end. Two generations were to pass before it was in some measure regained.

At the time of the exodus, about 1,000 Cherokees resisted and hid as fugitives in the mountains. Struggling for homes and official acceptance, the Cherokee refugees turned for help to a white trader, Col. William Holland Thomas. To Thomas the Eastern Cherokees owe their existence as a people. For 50 years he was to be intimately connected with their history. Since North Carolina did not recognize Indians as landowners until 1866, Thomas bought lands for them in his own name. He divided the lands into five districts, and gave them the names they still have: Bird Town, Paint Town, Wolf Town, Yellow Hill, and Big Cove. (The first three are names of Cherokee clans.)

Protection and Recognition

The tribe was hard-hit when illness and age caused Thomas to retire. Their lands, held in Thomas' name, were threatened when his creditors sued, and it was not until 1874, when the Government intervened, that Cherokee holdings were assured. To safeguard their interests further, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs was made trustee of Cherokee lands. In 1875, a constitution was adopted so the Cherokees could transact business with the United States (the immediate aims were to advance education, hold an agricultural fair, and appoint representatives to settle various matters with the Federal Government). In 1876, they were granted formal title to the Qualla Reservation and outlying tracts (present Cherokee holdings).

A Government agent was appointed for the Cherokees in 1882. A law of the same year authorized the Secretary of the Interior to investigate and report to Congress a plan of set-

tlement for all differences existing among Cherokee Indians east and west. In 1866, a Supreme Court decision held that the North Carolina Cherokees, in refusing to move with the body of the tribe, had dissolved connection with the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma, and were not recognized as a separate nation. The Court's decision was definitive: it ended all attempts to settle claims with the Cherokee Nation in the west, and determined the political status of the Eastern Cherokees.

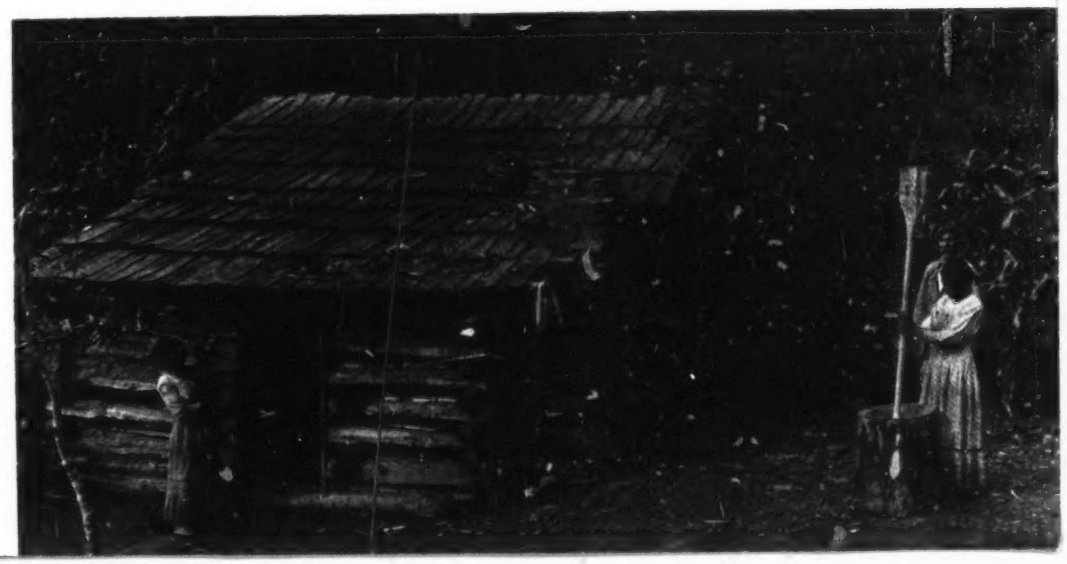
Since 1889 the Eastern Band of Cherokees has operated under State Charter empowering them to conduct business as a tribe.

In 1925, by petition of the tribal council and following an Act of Congress, title to Cherokee lands was transferred to the Government, which holds them in trust for the benefit of the band.

OTHER GROUPS

The Eastern Band of Cherokees comprises the largest single group of Indians in North Carolina and is the State's only federally administered tribe. However, North Carolina has about 32,000 other Indians, most numerous of which are the Lumbees (of Siouan or Croatan descent), scattered throughout counties in the south-east-central part of the State. So-called "submerged" groups are the Cubans of Person County; survivors of the Machapunga Tribe in coastal areas and Roanoke Island; mixed-bloods called "The Laster Tribe," in the northeast, and unidentified groups in Rockingham and Nash Counties. None of these Indians receives special services from the Federal Government. Supervising agency is the State Superintendent of Public Instruction at Raleigh, North Carolina.

Cherokee cabin home of the 1880's on Qualla Reservation, Swain and Jackson Counties, North Carolina. Photographer was James Mooney, a great American ethnologist of the time and an authority on the Cherokee Tribe.
(PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN OFFICE OF ANTHROPOLOGY, BUREAU OF AMERICAN ETHNOLOGY.)



THE EASTERN CHEROKEES TODAY

Some 6,000 members of the Eastern Cherokee Band still live in North Carolina, most of them on or adjacent to the 56,500-acre Cherokee Reservation in the western part of the State. They are citizens of the State and Nation in every respect, but they are governed by a Chief, Vice Chief, and a 12-member Tribal Council elected by the people. This council directs all tribal activities, including all municipal functions in the town of Cherokee.

Civic pride and self-leadership among the Cherokees are impressive. Seven community clubs are active on the reservation, and have been responsible for such projects as construction of community buildings, repair of homes and churches, and development of picnic sites, campgrounds and ball fields. The Cherokee Boys Farm Club, Inc., for example, provides practical leadership training for boys of Cherokee High School.

The club owns and operates a fleet of 12 school buses to serve Cherokee High School. It also operates an auto mechanic shop and finds odd jobs for the members. The club employs 50 to 100 boys and young adults each year on such projects.

The Cherokee economy is improving each year. Family and farm incomes have risen, as well as bank deposits and Tribal sales tax collections; and these higher revenues have in turn contributed to business expansion and community improvements. As a result, BIA welfare assistance payments have shown a marked decrease in each of the past 6 years.

Employment

Because most reservation land is forested and mountainous, farming is limited to narrow strips along waterways and adjoining lower hill slopes. Consequently, few Cherokees farm for a living; but many support themselves by working in reservation forests, which are harvested on a sustained-yield basis. More than 2 million board feet of timber are sold by the tribe each year to individual Cherokees, who in turn market sawlogs and other forest products to nearby industries.

Tribal members are assisted in further development of their natural resources by a BIA forester, soil conservationist, and real estate specialists. Land management help includes outdoor recreation planning and fish and game management. Matters dealing with leases, individual and tribal land records, and surveying and plotting are handled by BIA.

Approximately 385 Cherokees are employed in factories on the reservation, manufacturing textiles, leathercrafts, and hair-styling accessories.

Many Cherokee men and women supplement family income by making traditional handicraft articles. Situated in one of the Nation's most beautiful and popular vacation areas, the Cherokees have made tourism and related activities a most important source of income. During the tourist season, there is employment on the reservation for all members of the band seeking work.

BIA places Cherokees in jobs near the reservation, as well as in distant industrial areas. The Bureau also sponsors an on-the-job training program in several local industries, and provides institutional vocational training for qualified adults. Individual counseling and financial aid by BIA are important in helping trainees adjust to the demands of a competitive society.

Industrial Development

Efforts by the tribe and BIA to attract industry to the reservation have paid off handsomely in recent years. Using a combination of revolving credit funds of BIA and tribal funds, they have provided facilities for three manufacturing plants. Tribal investments in these industries has been sizable, amounting to more than $230,000. Community action also has helped spur a thriving tourist business each year (see Tourist Attractions) and successfully promoted a mutual marketing outlet for Cherokee handicraft.

Education

Cherokee children attend both public schools near the reservation and the Bureau operated central school at Cherokee grades kindergarten through 12. Tribal leaders are taking the initiative in working with public school and Bureau officials to effect a coordinated quality education program.

The effects of this at the Cherokee Central School are in the form of an expanded sports and music program, early childhood education, and compensatory programs in reading, science, and special education. Tribal funds as well as those made available through the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act have gone into this effort. Adult education is also offered through classes, conferences, and training programs.

So literate have the Cherokees become in the English language (about 90 percent) that the tribal council has discontinued services of an interpreter at its meetings.

Indians are highly satisfactory employees—adept, calm and dependable, say non-Indian supervisors of industrial plants located on Cherokee Reservation. Here a Cherokee woman puts finishing touches on beaded moccasins produced by leather-working factory, while Cherokee men attend machines in quilting plant. A third Indian-employing industry on Cherokee produces cosmetic aids to hair-styling.

BIA Cherokee elementary school, with modern gym in right background. Transportation of Cherokee children to Reservation schools is one of the projects of Cherokee Boys Farm Club, which owns and drives 12 school buses. Houses seen behind school are Cherokee homes built under Reservation housing development.

Social Welfare

The Cherokees' health is improving each year, with help of the U.S. Public Health Service's Division of Indian Health which operates a hospital on the reservation that provides in and out-patient care. More mothers are seeking prenatal care and Cherokees generally are increasingly accepting modern medical care resulting in fewer infant deaths.

Progress is being made in improving housing conditions on the reservation. The tribe has completed 36 new homes and has asked for 20 Mutual Help units.

BIA furnishes assistance in personal and family problems, child welfare, foster-home placement and adoption, and a child study program.

Financial aid is available to some members of the Band under the Social Security Act and amendments; those in need but not eligible for such aid may receive welfare assistance from the Bureau.

Wastebasket of natural and walnut-dyed river cane, hand-crafted by a Cherokee Indian weaver, is typical of basketry being produced on Reservation. Adult education classes assure continuing life of this ancient Cherokee craft, while Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., provides official display and marketing center for all handicrafts produced by members of the Band.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

Cherokee and vicinity is one of the Nation's most delightful vacationlands, enjoyed by some 5 million tourists each year.

Easily accessible by good paved roads, the reservation offers spectacular mountain scenery, mild climate, excellent trout streams, unusually varied sports opportunities, and miles of inviting trails for the naturalist, hiker, and horseback rider.

Throughout the reservation and adjacent counties are plentiful facilities for camping and picnicking. Nearby lakes invites swimming, boating, wading, and water skiing in invigorating, clean water.

Cherokee's 48 miles of clear mountain streams provide some of the best trout fishing in the southeast. Weekly throughout the season (April–October), the Cherokee stock their waters with brown, brook, and rainbow trout of legal size. Daily fishing permits and North Carolina fishing licenses are available at two convenient locations.

About 35 motels and cottages on the reservation, plus additional ones immediately adjacent, assure ample accommodations; trailer facilities and campsites are also available. The reservation has a variety of restaurants, barber and beauty shops, grocery stores, laundromats, and service stations, most of which are owned and operated by individual tribal members.

Boundary Tree Tribal Motel Enterprise, owned and operated by the Eastern Band of Cherokees, is one of several tribal projects reflecting the importance of tourism on the reservation. Located near the southern entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on U.S. Route 441, it consists of a lodge, dining room, snack bar and service station. Original units were built by Cherokee labor, and members of the Band completed the Lodge's handsome rock veneer decor.

The band owns and operates the Boundary Tree Motel Tribal Enterprise, a modern and attractive 62-unit motel, lodge, dining room, snack bar, and service station. Many Cherokee Indian craftsmen were employed in construction of the motel-lodge, which is usually 100 percent occupied during the tourist season.

In addition to scenery and recreation, Cherokee offers the special attraction of reservation Indian life and activities. The Cherokee Historical Association sponsors three programs of cultural and entertainment importance. Best known of these is the annual drama, "Unto These Hills," a portrayal of Cherokee history. Oconaluftee Indian Village and the Museum of the Cherokee Indian are other Association projects. All employ tribal members.

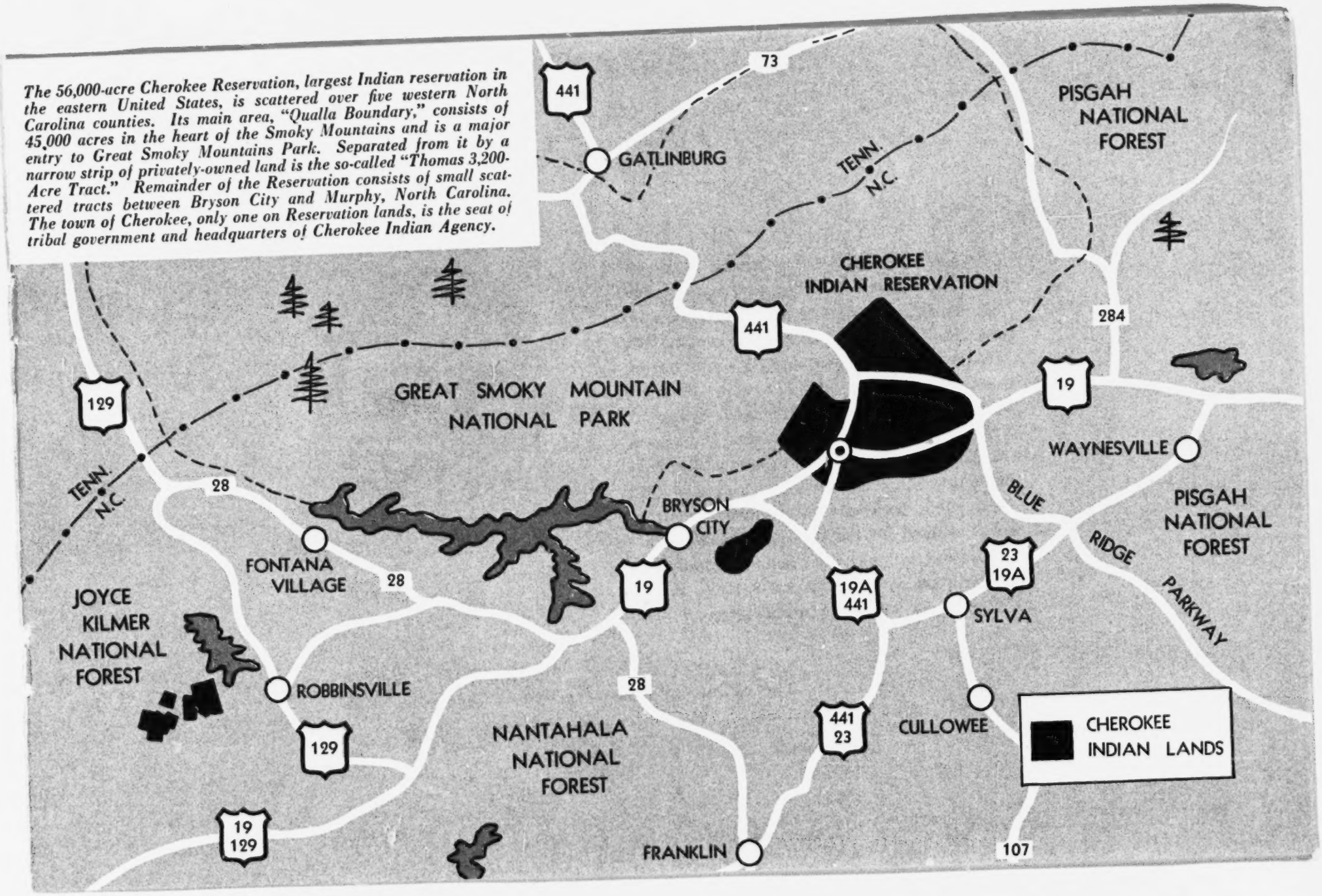
"Frontierland," featuring a reconstructed frontier town and fort with adjacent Indian villages, is another popular attraction for tourists traveling U.S. Highway 19, May through October.

Cherokee Indians have long been noted for the beauty of their crafts, particularly their basketry. Qualla Arts and Crafts Mutual, Inc., a tribal cooperative and official display and marketing center for Cherokee Indian crafts, operates a shop of interest to both the serious collector and tourists in search of small mementos. It deals only in authentic, Cherokee-made handicraft such as baskets, wood carvings, beadwork, and hand-woven linen and woolen fabrics.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1968 O—287-680

Scene from the centuries-old Eagle Dance, a highlight of "Unto These Hills," presented nightly except Mondays throughout the summer. Played in the 2900-seat Mountainside Theatre, this dramatization of Cherokee history has been a leading reservation tourist attraction since 1949.

The 56,000-acre Cherokee Reservation, largest Indian reservation in the eastern United States, is scattered over five western North Carolina counties. Its main area, "Qualla Boundary," consists of 45,000 acres in the heart of the Smoky Mountains and is a major entry to Great Smoky Mountains Park. Separated from it by a narrow strip of privately-owned land is the so-called "Thomas 3,200-Acre Tract." Remainder of the Reservation consists of small scattered tracts between Bryson City and Murphy, North Carolina. The town of Cherokee, only one on Reservation lands, is the seat of tribal government and headquarters of Cherokee Indian Agency.



Created in 1849, the Department of the Interior—a Department of Conservation—is concerned with the management, conservation, and development of the Nation's water, fish, wildlife, mineral, forest, and park and recreational resources. It also has major responsibilities for Indian and Territorial affairs.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department works to assure that nonrenewable resources are developed and used wisely, that park and recreational resources are conserved for the future, and that renewable resources make their full contribution to the progress, prosperity, and security of the United States—now and in the future.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 15 cents